

mental to a popular educational service. They see that service in terms of book circulation, whereas I am referring to a professional service of a type too rarely achieved in public libraries of today.

Beyond Dr. Danton's first paragraph, however, I found myself in almost complete accord with the author. He has defined the problem admirably and the framework of his proposals can be readily adapted to meet the training requirements for general public library service. In fact, if I were to characterize the monograph in a few words, I would call it one of the most important documents issued on this subject within my professional experience. Certain differences of opinion exist, of course, but they are not fundamental.

Three points in particular I wish to underscore as appearing important to me:

1. The effort to have one curriculum, with slight leeway for electives, serve all our professional needs has persisted too long. Inevitably in such a system the training objective is low, for it is influenced by the mediocrity of average standards of performance in the profession.

2. The sharp differentiation between skilled technicians and professional librarians is eminently sound. Small libraries will probably never be able to maintain three levels of staff members—clerks, technical assistants, and professional librarians—but the larger institutions cannot achieve their best development without such a plan. The recommended training program set up by Dr. Danton I am not competent to judge. It appears plausible, though my own thinking had led me to visualize the training for professional librarianship as something that would be secured after two or three years of successful experience in actual library service.

3. The fear that libraries will not provide opportunities for the highest level of professional competence to me seems ill-founded. Libraries can and will adapt their staff organizations once superior people become available. I am sure, however, that they cannot and will not accept even the superior training here referred to as the total of preparation required for filling key positions in our larger institutions. Experience with the public, with a staff, with book collections, is important for leadership. I stress this point because I have at times detected in some educators a feeling of resentment because able students with more than average training and native ability are not immediately placed in positions of command when they leave school. For various reasons that would be

impractical and it should be so recognized by faculty advisors.

In concluding this brief comment let me say that until some significant change is achieved in training—something as basic as the plan proposed by Dr. Danton—we cannot expect salary levels in libraries to move far beyond their present status. The past few years have brought important changes in the matter of compensation for librarians. From this point on a high level of professional performance will be necessary to secure the larger recognition we associate with other professions. As in all activities, proven competence must precede the claim for greater rewards. Dr. Danton's proposals point a way to divorcing the clerical and skilled activities from what we now broadly refer to as professional librarianship. Once this is accomplished and the elements of true professionalism in library service will begin to mature, the inadequacies we now complain of will gradually and naturally disappear.—*Ralph A. Ulveling.*

*Progress & Problems in Education for Librarianship.* By Joseph L. Wheeler. [New York City] Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1946. 107p.

The library profession in America, and indeed everyone who is concerned to any significant degree with libraries and their services, is again indebted to the Carnegie Corporation for a vivid and illuminating essay on the training of librarians. The report prepared by Joseph Wheeler in 1946 will take its place alongside the Williamson report of 1923, as a careful, intelligent appraisal of the conditions which exist today, and, if Mr. Wheeler has nothing so concrete as Williamson's recommendation that library schools be moved to universities, his report nevertheless embodies suggestions of potentially far-reaching consequences to American librarianship.

In attempting to grapple with any problem and find a solution to it, it is frequently desirable to set down as compactly as possible all of the criticisms or problem areas involved. This service is performed admirably by Mr. Wheeler, who seems to know, or to have heard at first hand, all of the faults and shortcomings which are ascribed to training for librarianship as it is found today. To a

limited degree these weaknesses, if such they be, are evaluated and in some cases methods of counteracting them are suggested. In other cases, evidence is presented to show that present practices in the better library schools have already met the criticism.

But this study does more than simply recount the current criticisms of education for librarianship. It notes and stresses, as the two areas which are most in need of emphasis in our library schools, (1) administration and (2) knowledge of books. This is putting the accent where it belongs. Librarians have achieved the unenviable reputation of knowing only the covers of books; the knowledge of books, the belief in their power, and the conviction of the importance of familiarity with the contents of books seems somehow to have been lost in the process of assembling huge aggregations of books and making them amenable to control through classification, cataloging, and charging systems. If librarianship is a profession, if it has intellectual content, that content consists of more than a knowledge of techniques; it consists, as well and perhaps to a greater degree, of a sound knowledge of books, their insides, as well as their covers."

There is an unending debate as to whether or not it is possible to train administrators. Whatever the answer may be to this question, it seems clear that it is possible to train men in the methods which have been used by successful administrators. The end result of such training may or may not be a good administrator, depending perhaps on personal factors which cannot be changed or developed by training. But library school courses in administration all too frequently are catchalls for topics or aspects of librarianship which do not fit neatly into other parts of the curriculum. Wheeler stands for a strong course in administration which concerns itself with the essentials of the administrative process, and it is to be hoped that a course based on his outline will be developed shortly.

The basic and most serious problem of the library profession today is its inability to attract a sufficient number of first-rate recruits. Wheeler has various suggestions for recruiting, but it is doubtful if any of them go directly to the heart of the problem or constitute in any sense a way out of the diffi-

culty. It seems clear that the fundamental problem of the profession is still economic—beginning salaries are too low, salary advancement is too slow and too restricted, and the number of positions which pay really attractive salaries is too small. The solution of this problem is not ready made, but it must be found eventually in higher salaries based on stronger qualifications and on demonstrated ability.

Wheeler finds little that is good in the Type III library schools. No doubt many of his censures are deserved by some of the schools, but it is also true that some, if not many, graduates of such schools are turning in top-drawer performances in some of our major libraries today and are doing work on a par with that of graduates of Type I and II schools. It is also true, it appears, that a fair percentage of the candidates for the master's degree in Type I schools were in the first instance graduates of Type III schools.

In his conclusion Wheeler states that the library profession "needs a complete review of services, lacks, and dangers, not in statistical or descriptive but in evaluative form." It is to be hoped that this recommendation will be acted upon promptly by a group of imaginative men of broad interests and sympathies who may be brought together and directed by a vigorous and intelligent chairman under the sponsorship of one of the foundations.

Those who look to the Wheeler report for a panacea will be disappointed; those who seek instead a review of the present situation and some sound suggestions for the future will be encouraged. All will know that the author who concludes his study with this paragraph has his feet firmly on the ground and views both the present and the future through the eyes of experience and sound common sense:

There is no quick answer to education for librarianship. The old-fashioned idea of discipline and hard work is valid still. In 1946, just as in the past, we need a sincere conviction that books, reading, study, and thinking are the foundation of progress; that knowledge and love of books made the keystone to librarianship. If librarians are so persuaded, then libraries will be better prepared to serve their function in society.

*Stephen A. McCarthy.*